

Helmut Brauss, pianist

**Thursday, August 15, 1991
at 8 pm**

**Convocation Hall
Arts Building
University of Alberta**

Program



Program:

Chaconne in G Major (1732)

Georg Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

Sonata in C major,
K.330 (1778)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Allegro moderato
Andante cantabile
Allegretto

Sonata in Eb Major,
opus 81a "Les Adieux" (1809)

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Adagio - Allegro
Andante espressivo
Vivacissimamente

INTERMISSION

La lugubre gondola I (1882)

Franz Liszt
(1811 - 1886)

SCHUMANN'S CARNAVAL - A MILESTONE OF GERMAN ROMANTICISIM IN MUSIC

The artistic human being as envisaged by important representatives of the German Romantic School like the poet E.T.A. Hoffmann or the composer Robert Schumann found its spiritual home not in the so-called reality but in the intangible realms of fantasy and imagination, in the world of nature represented by imaginary beings like fairies and ghosts and in particular in the intangible sphere of one's own ego. The continuous probing into these areas expanded the emotional perception of the real world by adding significant new dimension of inner experiences.

In a symbolic and sometimes cryptic way the Carnival reveals to the initiate a wide spectrum of inner experiences in a fascinating kaleidoskop of musical pictures derived from various sources and presented in the framework of a carnival ball, which allows for the opportunity of being oneself while hiding behind a mask without necessarily revealing one's real identity.

Aside from real ball scenes a number of important personalities are depicted by Schumann either under their real name or a pseudonym. In addition various figures of the *Commedia dell'arte* appear as symbols of inner states of mind which the composer projects through his music. This also includes his own dual personality as represented by Florestan and Eusebius.

The compositional unity of this multifaceted stage show is based on four notes in various forms (*Sphinxes*) derived from the letters of the Bohemian town A-S-C-H meaningful to Schumann as the home town of Ernestine von Fricken. These notes are used as thematic building stones for the various character pieces. After the introductory *Préambule* two popular figures from the *Commedia dell'arte* make their appearance, the sad Pierrot who seems to constantly stumble over his own feet and the joyful Harlequin entertaining the audience in leaps and bounds. The *Valse noble* leads to the double nature of Schumann as represented by the tender, lyrical Eusebius and the wild, passionate Florestan who throws an extraordinary temper tantrum only to be interrupted by the graceful appearance of the capricious Coquette. A reflective *Réplique* is followed by the whirling *Papillons* complete with a citation of a motif taken from Schumann's earlier *Papillons* op.2. The *Lettres dansantes* is a compositional masterpiece juggling with the four given notes mentioned above. Behind the pseudonym Chiarina we find Clara in a passionate musical evocation. The composer Chopin is easily discernible and in the traditional interpretation usually first depicted in the dramatic style of a Ballade, transformed in the repeat into the lyricism of a chopinesque Nocturne. Estrella stands for Ernestine von Fricken who at the end of the piece seems in parting to slam the door "con affetto".

The duet in the middle section of the **Reconnaissance** seems to depict an intimate conversation of lovers. This is one of the most imaginative pieces in this set. **Pantolon**, the busy miser and the coquettish chambermaid **Columbine** are musically interwoven and lead to the **Valse allemande** during which **Paganini** makes his fantastic appearance dazzling everybody with his devilish artistry. The striking sound effect created by Schumann at the end of this Intermezzo seems to indicate that the ball guests are probably totally stunned and only slowly pick up the waltz rhythm again. A passionate **Aveu** is followed by the **Promenade**, a psychologically most interesting piece. The musical phenomena experienced seem to suggest a meandering between two orchestras playing different tunes, whereby the composer creates a specifically blurred sound pattern when one is exactly in between.

In the "precipitandosi" of the short **Pause** everybody seems to get ready for the big finale, the **Marche des Davidsbündler contre les Philistins**. This piece is a documentation of the revolutionary spirit of the "musica nova" of the time. It is as if Schumann was saying, if only the spirit moves you, conventional rules can be thrown overboard. Thus - why not write a march in 3/4 time? Why not design a piece with a continuous accelerando over 7 pages? Why not with a hypnotic persistence displace the normal beat in the 3/4 bar pattern or insert a 4/4 bar in the middle of the flow. Yes - we the Davidsbündler are entitled to do that and we will be victorious over the those Philistins who still adhere to the old forms but are lacking the spiritual power to fill them -. Schumann certainly made his point and thereby created one of his greatest masterpieces for piano.

(Helmut Brauss)

Carnaval, opus 9 (1834-35)
Scènes mignonnes sur quatre notes

Robert Schumann
(1810 - 1856)

Préambule

Pierrot

Arlequin

Valse noble

Eusebius

Florestan

Coquette

Réplique

Papillons

A.S.C.H. - S. C.H.A. (Lettres dansantes)

Chiarina

Chopin

Estrella

Reconnaissance

Pantalon et Colombine

Valse allemande - Intermezzo: Paganini - Valse allemande

Aveu

Promenade

Pause

Marche des Davidsbündler contre les Philistins

University of Alberta Piano Masterclass

**presented by the Faculty of Extension and the
Department of Music**

Events:

Masterclasses: Monday, August 5 through Saturday, August 10 and Monday, August 12 through Friday August 16 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm in Convocation Hall. Auditors are welcome. The auditors fee is \$10.00 per session or \$100.00 for the entire course and is payable at the door.

Saturday, 8 pm	CLOSING RECITAL featuring performances by
August 17, 1991	masterclass participants. Program to be announced.
Convocation Hall	Free admission.

For more information call the Department of Music 492-3263.

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